

Our policy principles

North Carolina needs a transportation system for the 21st century. Current state transportation planning and financing policies are failing to address the challenges presented by rapid population growth, economic shifts, and rising construction costs. In addition, the recent McKinsey report and other studies show that too many NC Department of Transportation (DOT) projects are wasteful and politically driven. It is time for the North Carolina to adopt a better approach, based on these principles:

1. Project prioritization. Resources will always be limited. Projects should be prioritized to receive funding using established, objective criteria that reflect statewide needs – not, as they too often are today, by political patronage exercised behind closed doors. The prioritization process should be transparent and allow for meaningful public participation.
2. Fix it First. The first priority for limited resources should be to protect the investments we've already made, but our current practices heavily favor new construction. A better approach is to balance maintenance and new construction to ensure we can keep our existing transportation infrastructure safe and operating at peak efficiency.
3. Multi-modal Alternatives. North Carolina should significantly increase spending to provide accessible and affordable transportation options to meet the growing needs of communities, including rail, bus, para-transit, and bike and pedestrian alternatives.
4. Linking Land Use and Transportation. As our transportation needs change, spending should be coordinated with land use planning to promote long-term congestion relief, transit-oriented and mixed use development, affordable housing options, access to jobs and services, improved public health, and air, water and land conservation.
5. Funding Fairness. New revenue sources for transportation should be chosen with attention to fairness, equity, and sustainability – not raiding health, education and human service budgets, or pursuing privatization schemes that would transfer public infrastructure to the private sector.

These recommendations reflect the view that transportation infrastructure should serve all segments of society; promote sound economic development; and contribute to a high quality of life for North Carolina's residents. Any increase in funding from the NC General Assembly to NC DOT should be conditioned on the incorporation of these policies and independent verification that "best practices," including necessary structural changes, have been adopted and internalized at the staff and board levels.